



101 N. Main

New Life for an Old Building

By: Amy Miller,
Community Development Director

We caught up with Allan Tolbert on his way to 101 North Main Street.

What brought you to Elgin? “My wife, Deborah Ragland, is from Elgin. For years we’ve helped with the annual Pleasant Grove Cemetery cleanup. Ten years ago we bought property to escape from the big city.” Generations of Deborah’s relatives rest in peace at

Pleasant Grove. On their trips to Elgin, Allan and Deborah kept up with downtown improvements.

Why downtown Elgin? “We noticed this building because it was so sad in its deterioration. We wanted to be a part of making good things happen downtown.”

What draws you to renovate a historic building? “It is a joy to renovate buildings and put them back to good use. It would have been a terrible loss to have this building torn down. We see a lot of good people doing good work, and have for years. This makes things happen. You can see that things have come a long way in Elgin.” Elgin is a Nationally Accredited Main Street Community and a Texas Main Street City. Since 1990 the private and public sectors





have invested more than \$12.9 million in the downtown area. As a Main Street City Elgin has access to free technical advice for the downtown area.

What should someone considering a historic renovation look for? “Talk to the city from the beginning and the state. They have assistance programs that will help you. This project would not be economically feasible without those programs.” The downtown historic district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and most properties downtown are eligible for a 20% federal tax credit and a 25% state franchise tax credit. The Elgin Economic Development Corporation offers a \$25,000 reimbursement grant for projects investing \$100,000 or more. The Main Street program offers a paint reimbursement program and a free roll-off dumpster for the removal of demolition and construction materials.

What was the most interesting element of the building, or story about the building, that you have found so far? “The Smith brothers built it and ran a

saloon in it. In 1904 the rear addition was added for a kitchen. The second floor was laid out like a top notch boarding house. My favorite part is the claw foot tubs.” The building has 11 foot beaded board ceilings, and original moldings around the windows.

What kinds of uses will we see in the building? “We are building four loft apartments and commercial space for the first floor.” Three of the apartments are leased and we are getting lots of calls about space. The zoning overlay that City Council approved recently allows more mixed use in the downtown district. On Main Street from 2nd to Central Avenue and on Central Avenue and Depot Streets, up to 50% of the rear first floor can be residential. In the area surrounding 100% can be residential. The whole downtown area has a greater variety of business uses such as food processing, wineries, breweries, cabinetry making, pottery, tile making, etc. For more information on the overlay and a map visit www.elgintx.com/sustainable%20places.com

What does your family think of this project? “They love it! My daughter and son-in-law are moving to Elgin. I've seen downtowns transform. I see that happening here and I want to be a part of it.” For more information about downtown and investing in our community, call Amy Miller at 512-229-3213.

